



CRYPTO GOES INSTITUTIONAL IN 2024

- 93% now handling Bitcoin with ETFs a major driver, GDF study shows

Institutional investors are increasingly handling Bitcoin as part of their business and looking to other digital asset opportunities, new global research from industry association Global Digital Finance (GDF) shows.

Almost all (93%) questioned say they now handle Bitcoin in some shape or form including as part of ‘testing’ the digital asset sector, the study with major finance firms in the US, Asia, Europe (including the UK) and the Middle East responsible for more than \$221.75 billion assets under management found. Around 86% of those not currently handling Bitcoin plan to do so.

Financial institutions are currently most likely to be handling Bitcoin as custodians – 74% said they did so – but nearly two-thirds (67%) do so through ETFs or ETPs while 54% handle Bitcoin as part of client trading. Around a third (31%) engage with Bitcoin through brokerage and one in six (16%) as proprietary traders.

The engagement with Bitcoin applies to other digital assets. Around 87% handle Ethereum and 83% say they handle other cryptocurrencies or tokens, the research by GDF, which is focused on accelerating digital finance through the adoption of best practices and standards and engagement with regulators and policymakers, found.

Financial institutions trading Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies are most likely to use derivatives with 40% doing so compared with 31% using spot and 39% using a combination of both.

Around 58% say they have deployed, used or handled crypto derivatives while 45% have used DeFi protocols such as Aave or Compound and one in four (25%) have deployed, used or handled NFTs.

Two out of three (66%) work with central crypto exchanges and 61% work with technical service providers while 57% work with stablecoin providers. Other firms they engage with while trading include custodians used by 47% and data service providers used by 46%. Around a third (31%) work with market makers and liquidity providers.



Elise Soucie, Executive Director, Policy and Regulation, Board Member adds: “This is the year of crypto going institutional with our research showing most firms are handling Bitcoin in some shape or form, and that is also the case with other cryptocurrencies and tokens.

The SEC’s decision to approve the listing and trading of spot Bitcoin ETPs has had a major influence but even before then, momentum has been building and the current strong performance of the digital assets market is adding to that.”

The GDF mission is to make finance global and digital. Digital assets and digital financial market infrastructure have the potential to reshape financial services and markets to create truly global, accessible, and inclusive finance.

GDF is world’s largest open innovation community advancing digital finance. GDF community works to promote and underpin the greater adoption of market standards for the use of crypto and digital assets, through the development of best practices and governance standards in a shared engagement forum with industry, policymakers and regulators.



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Notes to Editors

* GDF commissioned independent research company PureProfile to interview 100 senior executives at financial institutions in Europe (including the UK), the Middle East, Asia and the US whose organizations collectively manage around \$221.75 billion worth of assets. The survey was conducted in April 2024.

For further information

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Global Digital Finance

Global Digital Finance (GDF) is a global member's association that delivers an open innovation platform that brings together industry firms and policymakers and regulators dedicated to the development of digital finance in the global financial services sector.

Established in 2018, GDF convenes a broad range of industry participants, with 300-plus global community members – including some of the most influential digital asset and token companies, academics and professional services firms supporting the industry.